

Horse Safety - Trailer or Other Hauling



from USDA Extension Service

1. Loading a horse on a trailer should be done by two persons if at all possible.
2. Always stand to one side, never directly behind, when loading or unloading a horse from a trailer or truck.
3. The circumstances of loading a horse vary, but the following methods are given in order of preference: a. Train the horse so it can be sent into the trailer. b. In a two-horse trailer lead the horse into the left side while you stand on the right side of the center divider, or vice versa. c. It is least desirable to get in front and lead the horse in. Never do this without an escape door or front exit. Even with a door, use caution—most are awkward to get through, and also, horses have been known to follow the handler out.
4. Be certain the ground area behind and around the truck or trailer affords safe footing before loading or unloading.
5. It is safest to remove all equipment (bridles, saddle, etc.) before loading. Use your halter.
6. Always speak to a horse in a truck or trailer before attempting to handle it.
7. If you have trouble loading or unloading, get experienced help.
8. Secure the butt bar or chain before tying the horse. Use care when reaching for it. Ease it down when you unfasten it to avoid bumping the horse's legs.
9. In unloading, always untie a horse before opening the gate or door.
10. Avoid slick trailer floors. Use matting or some type of bedding for secure footing.
11. Check your trailer regularly for: – Rotting or weakened floor boards. – Rusted and weakened door hinges. – Broken hitch welds. – Worn or broken spring shackles and wheel bearings. Have a competent mechanic check these when the trailer is serviced.
12. Make sure the trailer is properly constructed. You may need to ask an expert about this.
13. Be certain the trailer meets State requirements for brakes and lights.
14. The trailer should be high enough to give a horse ample neck and head room. Remove or cover any protruding objects.

15. When driving always: - Double check all connections (lights, brakes, hitch, and safety chains). - Be certain all doors are closed and secured. - Drive carefully. Make turns slowly. Start and stop slowly and steadily. - Look far ahead to avoid emergencies. Drive in a defensive manner.
16. It is safer when hauling a stallion with other horses to load the stallion first and to unload it last.
17. Distribute the weight of the load evenly. When hauling one horse, it is considered safest to load it on the left side of the trailer.
18. Never throw lighted cigarettes or matches from a car or truck window. You might start a fire in the area or the wind might suck them into the trailer.
19. Check the horse and trailer hitch at every stop.
20. Opinions vary on hauling a horse tied or loose. If you tie, allow sufficient length of rope so the horse can move its head for balance. Use a safety release or a quick-release knot.
21. If hauling in a truck or other open carrier, you should protect the horse's eyes from wind and foreign objects. Use goggles or some type of wind shield.
22. Horses are like people-some get sick from motion. Adjust the feeding schedule to avoid traveling when the horse is full of feed and water. Feed smaller amounts more often if necessary.

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